



# NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS | Jacksonville District

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## ***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

### **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers releases draft Environmental Assessment on Via Verde**

*Document is available for public review and comment*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District announced today that the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the natural gas pipeline project in Puerto Rico, known as Via Verde, is now available for public review and comment.

The EA documents the Corps' review and evaluation process to date on the permit application submitted by Autoridad de Energia Electrica/Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA), San Juan, P.R. to install a natural gas pipeline, encompassing 1,672 acres and traversing 235 rivers and wetlands and 369 acres of jurisdictional waters of the United States. Under the Clean Water Act, a Department of the Army permit is required when a proposed project may impact waters of the United States, including wetlands. The Corps evaluates such projects in consultation with resource agencies and considering input from all interested parties.

As a result of extensive consultations with the applicant and appropriate resource agencies, significant changes have been made to the project as initially proposed, which will avoid and minimize impacts to aquatic resources, and compensate for unavoidable impacts. An exhaustive analysis of alternatives is documented in the EA and has led the Corps to conclude that the proposed alternative is the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative.

More than 6,000 comments have been received on this proposed project to date, providing a diverse range of viewpoints on private property, cultural resources, environmental and safety issues. A summary of comments received is included in the draft EA. Interested parties are invited to submit new comments relative to their review of the draft EA. As previously received comments have been considered and documented in the draft EA, there is no need to resubmit them.

The draft EA and supporting documents are available for review at:

<http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/Divisions/Regulatory/interest.htm>; select the Via Verde Natural Gas Pipeline link. New comments and new information may be provided through December 30, 2011 by mail to:

District Engineer  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District



P.O. Box 4970  
Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019

Comments may also be sent via e-mail to: [ViaVerdePermit@usace.army.mil](mailto:ViaVerdePermit@usace.army.mil) or provided by telephone toll-free at: 1-800-291-9405 and selecting the option for Regulatory Permits. A Spanish language voicemail option may also be selected.

After the public review and comment period closes, the Corps will finalize the EA and make one of three decisions: proceed to conduct a more rigorous Environmental Impact Statement, issue the permit or deny the permit. The Corps is neither an advocate nor an opponent of any proposed project, and strives to make fair, reasonable and timely decisions on permit applications in accordance with the public interest.

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